

# Global AIDS Program (GAP)



Under the direction of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator's Office, the HHS/CDC Global AIDS Program (GAP) is a proud partner in the unified U.S. Government effort to implement the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. GAP helps resource-constrained countries prevent HIV infection; improve treatment, care, and support for people living with HIV; and build capacity and infrastructure to address the global HIV/AIDS pandemic.

## Making an Impact: Stories from the Field — Botswana



### Listeners provide valuable feedback

Letter competitions and the monitoring of hotlines are two methods often used by *Makgabaneng* to determine the impact the program has on its listeners. The program has held letter competitions asking listeners to respond to specific questions regarding characters and storylines. Responses have shown a high level of knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS issues and suggest that characters may be positive role models for listeners.

An example of this positive modeling is reflected in the letter writer below:

*"I like [the character] Masego when she says she wants to go for an HIV test...because even me, it taught me to test for that disease, because it kills."*

Botswana has undertaken some innovative approaches to combat HIV. Because of an adult HIV prevalence rate of more than 37percent, the country has enlisted every possible weapon in its battle to combat HIV. Perhaps one of the more intriguing tools in Botswana's arsenal is the radio drama *Makgabaneng*, meaning "Rocky Road."

Radio is the main mode of entertainment in Botswana, which makes it an excellent medium for communication in the country. With support from the government of Botswana and GAP, *Makgabaneng*, focuses on affecting behavior change in its listeners through "education-entertainment."

The radio drama uses the HHS/CDC's MARCH Model (Modeling and Reinforcement to Combat HIV/AIDS) to encourage HIV prevention behaviors and positive attitudes toward people living with HIV/AIDS. The rationale behind the program is that if listeners identify with the appropriate characters in the drama, they will model and modify their behavior after the character's behavior.

Two different 15-minute episodes have each aired twice weekly on two nationally broadcast stations since 2001. The scripts are written, produced, and acted in the Setswana language by local talent. The characters provide models for behavior, and the storylines are "emotionally compelling" and reflect the culture and the support services of the local environment, according to **Dr. Katina A. Pappas-DeLuca**, a HHS/CDC Behavioral Scientist, who has worked on the project. The *Makgabaneng* project also includes listening discussion groups and road shows to reinforce prevention behaviors and encourage listenership in the community.

A 2003 HHS/CDC cross-sectional survey of Botswanas found that *Makgabaneng* was extremely popular, with nearly half of respondents saying that they listened to the drama one or more times every week. Weekly listening to the drama was associated with greater knowledge about key HIV issues and with less stigmatizing attitudes toward people living with HIV/AIDS.

Specifically, weekly listeners were:

- ◆ more likely (82.8 percent) to recognize that prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) is possible than other respondents (66 percent);
- ◆ more likely (70.8 percent) to say they would allow their children to play with HIV-positive peers than other respondents (58.9 percent);
- ◆ more likely (96 percent) to say they would allow a HIV-positive relative to live in their household than other respondents (87.4 percent).

Last Updated January 2005

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